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ABSTRACT

Students and teachers at a suburban high school in Oregon and employers associated with cooperative work experience (CWE) and experience-based career education (EBCE) programs were interviewed regarding youth responsibility. Specific focuses were perceptions about the meaning of responsibility, youth attitudes regarding being given adult responsibility, kinds of student responsibilities, elements of the school and workplace contributing to or reducing the opportunity for young people to demonstrate responsible behavior, and ways to modify school and workplace settings to enhance responsible behavior. Students felt responsible persons were reliable, trustworthy, and dependable. Teachers indicated responsible students used time well and were punctual. Employers' ideas of a responsible worker centered on punctuality, self-initiative, and loyalty. Students perceived the greatest help in becoming a responsible person as coming from home, work, and school, in that order. Students rated themselves as most responsible at job sites, somewhat lower in the CWE and EBCE programs, and lowest in their regular classes. Staff ratings correlated significantly only with the students' self ratings at the job site. Implications were that teachers, employers, and parents must provide young people with opportunities to make decisions and that effective strategies for developing responsibility in young people should be explored. (YLB)

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HELPING YOUTH BECOME MORE RESPONSIBLE

by

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"What Third Wave employers increasingly need, therefore, are men and women who accept responsibility, who understand how their work dovetails with that of others, who can handle even larger tasks, who adapt swiftly to changed circumstances, and who are sensitively tuned in to the people around them."

Alvin Toffler
The Third Wave

HELPING YOUTH BECOME MORE RESPONSIBLE[1]

The above quote highlights the feeling of millions of employers today that young people, as well as adults, lack a sense of responsibility. This often leads to young people not being hired or being fired after only a few days on the job. In a summary of eleven earlier studies of employer attitudes toward and perceptions of the deficiencies in the job performance of young people, nine problem areas surfaced (Richards, 1981). One of the nine problem areas cited was dependability, which was described as "[demonstrating] good attendance and punctuality, the acceptance of responsibility and accountability." In his study in Delaware, New Jersey and Pennsylvania, Richards found dependability to be the most critical deficiency employers saw in young peoples' work skills.

Researchers at the University of Minnesota have found that psychological and social maturity is one of five factors that make youth more employable. Key dimensions of maturity include a sense of social and personal responsibility, self-control, self-direction and a sense of obligation to complete tasks (Hedin and Conrad, 1979).

In discussing the need to give young people some responsibility to make decisions within their projects or work sites, Diane Hedin states

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1 Research for this study was sponsored by the Education and Work Program of the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) under contract #400-80-0105 from the National Institute of Education (NIE). The ideas and options in this paper do not necessarily reflect the position of NWREL nor NIE and no official endorsement should be inferred.

that, "The ability to make responsible, reasonable, and adequate decisions is perhaps the single most important skill in adult life. Young people need practice doing so within semi-protected settings, in the company of adults who can offer guidance, support and technical advice (Hedin, 1980, p. 4)."

Acceptance of responsibility for making a career choice has been found to have a significant and stable correlation with control of environment and with the amount of career information that upper elementary and junior high students acquire in a career education program (Minnich and Gastright, 1974). Thus, helping students recognize their responsibility in making career choices is an important factor in helping them develop career maturity.

Acting responsibly is not only important in the workplace but also in school and other settings. In Fifteen Thousand Hours, the author followed 2,700 pupils from the end of elementary school through twelve different secondary schools in South London. He found that schools that created an expectation for pupils to act responsibly and provided them an opportunity to do so through appointments to quasi-supervisory posts showed better student behavior and exam success.

In a previous study on Improving Learning in the Workplace, (Owen and Owens, 1981), 1,100 senior high school students enrolled in Experience-Based Career Education (EBCE) Programs[2] in 16 states were surveyed. The survey centered on the job site characteristics youth associate with excellent or with poor community learning experiences. Being given adult responsibility was rated by youth as an important factor influencing quality of learning at job sites.

Students participating in this study took part in career exploration experiences in at least six different sites over the year. They were then asked to write down what they actually did at a jobsite where they learned the most and what they did at a jobsite where they learned little or nothing. An independent consultant then assigned a high, moderate or

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[2] EBCE is an alternative high school program that integrates student learning experiences in the school and in the community. Three key areas are emphasized: career skills, life skills and basic skills.

low rating to their responses. The criteria applied were (a) the presumed importance to the employer if the tasks were not performed or performed incorrectly and (b) the degree of independence of thought or action required to perform the task.

Proportionately, there were twice as many high responsiblity tasks listed for the excellent learning sites and more than twice the proportion of moderate level tasks. Respondents at the poor learning sites performed almost four times the number of low responsibility tasks.

Conceptual Considerations

The development of this research was influenced by several conceptual considerations. These included: (1) distinctions in the meaning of the term responsibility, (2) recognition that a person may demonstrate various levels of responsibility depending on the context in which he or she is operating, (3) four psychological models of responsibility, (4) differences in how people demonstrate responsibility in relation to people, data and things, and (5) the organizational-individual interaction in which a person operates.

Webster's Third New International Dictionary includes in its definition of responsibility the "ability to respond or answer for one's conduct and obligations, capability of determining one's own acts and being chargeable with the result." Synonyms include accountability, reliability, trustworthiness and answerability.

In describing the essential elements of a youth participation program, the National Commission on Resources for Youth defines "responsible" to mean "(1) having others dependent on one's actions, and (2) the opportunity to experience the consequences of one's actions, including the failures (Dollar, 1980, p. 48)."

The terms "responsible" and "responsibility" are often used in various ways. In one sense, responsibility refers to the level of task accountability involved in a particular job. For example, most people would agree that making change correctly from a cash register requires a higher level of responsiblity than sweeping the floor. Secondly, responsibility is used to refer to a person's role. For example, a manager has the responsibility for supervising others. Third, when a

person demonstrates a consistent pattern of responding in a reliable manner we refer to that person's character trait as being responsible. In the present study involving students, teachers and employers we tried to distinguish between these three uses of the term.

For a discussion of the philosophy and ethics of responsibility, the reader is referred to an excellent article by Sumner Twiss, Jr. in The Journal of Medicine and Philosophy. In this article, Twiss (1977) describes two common features of the notion of responsibility (the accountability for actions and liability for consequences) and three senses of responsibility (descriptive, normative and role responsibility). Based on Twiss's logical analysis, one essential element of responsibility refers to a person's accountability for his or her actions based upon the person's capability to perform voluntary actions. The second dimension involves liability for the consequences of one's actions implying various conditions of liability. Both of these elements seem important to me to consider in discussing the level of responsibility appropriate for a teenager involved in community-based learning. For example, the student is not a mature adult possessing the experience that may go along with a particular work situation and could, therefore, sometimes use guidance in interpreting the work environment and interactions. The liability issue becomes apparent in relation to worker insurance issues and the legal liabilities of a young person while at an employer's site. Such concerns have resulted in a number of EBCE and other community-based programs purchasing insurance so that the participating employers will not be at risk.

Twiss distinguishes among three types of responsibility. "Descriptive responsibility refers to an actual relationship between a person's action and its outcome; normative responsibility refers to such a relationship that ought to exist according to some standard (p. 335)." His illustration of the consequences of an auto accident helps clarify the difference. Running a stop sign and hitting another car would make me descriptively responsible while I am normatively responsible for reporting the accident and calling an ambulance if needed. The third

type of responsibility (which may be just an instance of normative responsibility) is called by Twiss "role responsibility." Role responsibility is typically attached to social roles and role relationships of a semi-permanent nature such as between parent and child, or employer and employee. Role responsibility pertains mainly to the fulfillment of duties.

Although a person is judged as being responsible depending on how he or she acts in a number of situations, we realized that differences in expectations, motivation and amount of freedom provided may greatly influence the amount of responsibility someone shows. Thus, in this study we asked students to rate how responsible they felt they were in three distinct settings--in a classroom, in an EBCE or Cooperative Work Experience CWE learning center, and when they were actually out at a jobsite. As will be discussed later, young people often judged themselves differently in these three settings.

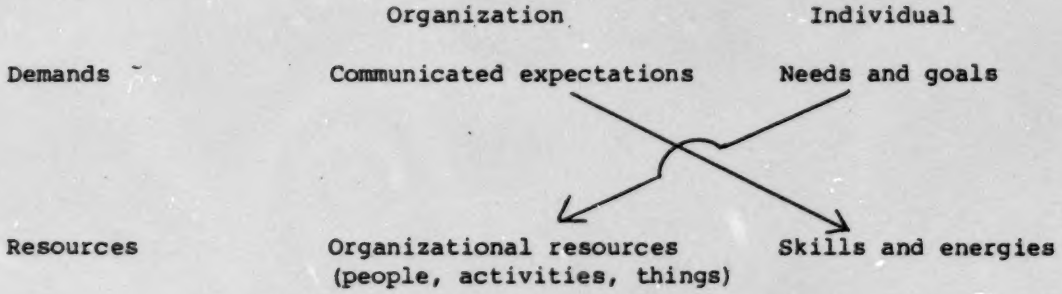
In a recent article in the American Psychologist, four models of responsibility are described (Brickman, Rabinowitz, Karuza, Coates, Cohen and Kidder, 1982). "By drawing a distinction between attribution of responsibility for a problem (who is to blame for a past event) and attribution of responsibility for a solution (who is to control future events), we derive four general models that specify what form people's behavior will take when they try either to help others or to help themselves (p. 368)." In the moral model, people assume responsibility for both problems and solutions. In the compensatory model people are seen as not responsible for their problems but responsible for solutions. In the medical model individuals are seen as responsible for neither problems nor solutions. And in the enlightenment model, people are responsible for problems but not for solutions. Questions were used in our NWREL student, teacher and employer interviews to attempt to determine whether they viewed young people as responsible for problems, solutions, both or neither.

The dynamics of the organization-individual interaction (Porter, Lawler and Hackman, 1975) provides a useful framework for viewing a student involved in working or in a learning project at an employer

site. In their model depicted in Chart 1 it becomes clear that both the organization and individual have demands and resources that are interrelated. In the case of an EBCE program, students have a need to gather career information about various occupations at a particular employer site. For cooperative work experience students, their need is to gain paid work experience related to some of their courses in school. From the employer's perspective, the expectation for EBCE students is that they will observe the rules of the company, learn the information needed to complete the projects, and not interfere with the productivity of the company. For cooperative work experience students, the expectation is that students will learn the job and justify the money they are earning for their work.

Chart 1

Dynamics of the Organization-Individual Interactions



The framework described in Chart 1 was applied in the NWREL study by asking participants to describe what their expectations were in the various settings we studied--school, home and workplace.

Kelly (1982) also looks at the broader framework in which we operate when he emphasizes the importance in education of environmental competence, which is the ability to act in accordance with one's intentions. He states that "posessing the freedom and competence to regulate one's own life is a fundamental precondition to being legitimately held accountable for one's actions (p. 10)."

Related Practices

In considering field experience education in relation to stage theories of development, Erdynast (1981) has identified three levels of student placement requiring progressively higher levels of responsibility. In the first level, students are assigned activities where the expectations are that they "will learn the ropes, replicate the work and carry out the responsibilities for that role (p. 18)." In essence they have responsibility for consequences of themselves. At the second level, student placements involve responsibilities for other people. At the third level, placements involve students in policy formation in which they have social responsibilities for both individuals and society.

In his article on developing competence in young people, Holloway (1982) points out that one solution proposed by scholars to the problem of excluding youth from adult roles is to give them more responsibility for managing their own affairs at an earlier age. This suggestion has been picked up by the National Commission on Resources for Youth and incorporated as one of their four criteria for assessing youth participation programs. Specifically, they ask "Does the project involve the youth in responsible challenging action?"

The present research was aimed at answering the following specific questions:

- What are the perceptions of youth, educators and employers about the meaning of responsibility?
- How important do youth feel it is that they be given adult responsibility?
- What responsibilities do students have at school, home and at worksites?
- What elements of the school contribute to or reduce the opportunity for young people to demonstrate responsible behavior?
- What elements of the workplace contribute to or reduce the opportunity for young people to demonstrate responsible behavior?
- In what ways can school and workplace settings be modified to enhance opportunities for responsible behavior?

The study was conducted in May, 1982 at a suburban high school in Oregon. Data were gathered through face-to-face interviews.

Program staff from a Cooperative Work Experience (CWE) Program and an Experience-Based Career Education (EBCE) Program were asked to nominate five male and five female students they judged to be high in responsibility and five male and five female students judged to be low in responsibility. The NWREL interviewers were not told how students were judged to avoid biasing the interviews. Staff in each of these programs were interviewed, as well as a cross-section of six nonprogram staff at the high school. In addition, nine employers associated with CWE and nine with EBCE were interviewed. The employers were selected from a diversity of occupational fields, representing a balance of blue and white collar workers. A total of 40 students, 15 teachers and 18 employers were interviewed. Student interviews took about 20 minutes; staff and employer interviews lasted from 20 to 40 minutes. Notes were taken during interviews and rewritten later.

SOME ANSWERS WE FOUND

The Meaning of Responsibility

To Students

Rather than giving an abstract definition of responsibility, students were requested to think of a friend whom they felt was very responsible. They were then asked "What does he or she do that makes you consider him/her responsible?"

Their responses overwhelmingly centered on the qualities of reliability, trustworthiness and dependability.

Examples included persons who complete tasks, keep obligations, who are responsible to their friends, and "never let you down." Students also mentioned frequently that a responsible person is one who is "on time," acts independent, and does well in school--i.e., gets good grades, completes assignments, is involved in school activities and understands the importance of education.

Qualities of irresponsible persons are generally reported by students as the opposite of the qualities of responsible ones. Thus, irresponsible persons are described as unreliable, not doing what they

say they will do, lacking a sense of commitment and being willing to lie. Further, they are not punctual with school, work or friends. Another characteristic students frequently mentioned was sloppiness or "goofing off." Students also stated that irresponsible students are ones who "don't care for themselves or for others," who are inconsiderate, disrespectful of others' possessions, and who take advantage of others.

To Teachers

Teachers were asked what the idea of a responsible student meant to them and what student behaviors would illustrate this. Their most prevalent responses indicated that responsible students were those who used time well, appeared on time at the workplace, and met scheduled appointments.

Other frequent responses were being accountable and displaying a positive or good attitude. Individual responses included: showing maturity, being trustworthy, being cooperative, developing a "we" spirit, being prepared for work, conforming to program standards and demonstrating loyalty to program/jobsite.

To Employers

Employers' ideas of a responsible worker centered on three key concepts: being on time, having self-initiative and showing loyalty to the company or organization. Employers mentioned "being on time" more frequently than anything else in response to this question. It is readily apparent that whatever else the idea of responsibility means, it is closely associated in employers' minds with appearing for work punctually.

Mentioned nearly as frequently were a cluster of responses that had to do with the importance of taking responsibility for one's own actions, showing initiative, and displaying independence and self-motivation.

Employers also repeatedly cited showing interest, commitment and loyalty to the company or organization for which the student is working.

Across the three groups the idea of showing up on time seemed a particularly important aspect of responsibility. Being dependable, independent and showing commitment were also important dimensions mentioned.

BECOMING MORE RESPONSIBLE: WHAT HELPS

Students were asked where they felt they got the greatest help in becoming a responsible person and why.

The greatest help was perceived to come from home, work and school, in that order.

Parental example was cited most frequently as the best help students received in becoming responsible persons. Students stated, for example, that parents let them take responsibility for their own actions, let them learn by trial and error, and show that they trust them and respect their decisions. Restricting students' activities when they act irresponsibly and challenging them to take on more responsibility also help.

Work was also perceived as an important setting for learning responsibility. Specifically, being at a worksite gave the students the opportunity to work independently and to feel that they're "worth something." Being trusted, having rules to follow, completing specific tasks and teaching and supervising others were also seen as ways to develop responsiblity.

At school some students felt they were helped to become more responsible by being expected to be on time and to do homework. Several mentioned that EBCE staff helped them by "trusting me and not always being on my back," giving students freedom and expecting that the work will be complete.

Students were asked what other experiences have helped make them more responsible. A paid job, upkeep of a car and loan payments were mentioned by several students. Other experiences cited were working as a lifeguard, taking wilderness survival class, living on one's own and supporting oneself, experiencing family tragedies, getting peer pressure from academically-oriented friends, and taking responsibility for the physical safety of self and others acquired through military service.

Role of the Home

Students, staff and employers all stressed the importance of the home in helping develop responsibility in youth.

Staff felt the family has a critical role to play because the major contact occurs in the family. The family also sets the values while the school merely reinforces them. Many of their responses indicated their belief that the family should provide children with a basic orientation to rules and standards, an understanding of the need for them, and the consequences of violating them.

The family should also provide the structure, discipline and reward system within which standards can be maintained and reinforced.

A few staff were surprisingly skeptical of the role that the family could play. One response was that "if parents haven't helped by the time kids are teenagers, it would be best for them to stay out of the way and let the schools have a fresh start." Another staff member called attention to parents who lie and cover up for their children.

In spite of the skepticism, however, staff members responded most frequently that the family is the most responsible unit in helping young people develop responsible behaviors.

Appropriate roles employers felt a family should play may be clustered into two areas: (1) families should teach discipline and help children learn how to carry out tasks responsibly, and (2) families need to pay more attention to children.

Within the first area, employers felt families should give children housework responsibilities, teach care of equipment and respect for property and other persons. Families should also administer discipline, and say "no" more often.

Within the second area, employers felt families need to pay more attention to their children, spend time with them, communicate with them and show love, care and concern.

Employers also felt that families need to teach young people that they are in control of their own lives and should therefore plan them. Families should also set a responsible example for youth, teach the importance of education, and teach what is and is not acceptable in daily life.

The Role of the School

Both employers and teachers felt strongly that schools play an important role in helping young people develop a sense of responsibility.

Employers felt schools should teach students about expectations in the world of business, provide ways for the students to be exposed to business, and work as closely as possible with employers.

Staff reported unanimously that schools should be working to help students develop responsible behavior. However, they described a number of limitations to what schools could do. Staff were receptive to the ideas that it is appropriate to model responsible behavior and that high school students are not yet adults. At the same time they warned that although schools can be a good place to learn responsibility, they can't teach it. Staff also warned that the development of responsibility is continuous, and to expect high schools to be able to easily change patterns that had already emerged would be unreasonable.

Specific things that staff thought their high school should be doing clustered around four main areas: (1) infusing the concept of responsibility into classes, (2) developing and/or promoting school policies that are consistent with the concept of responsibility, (3) encouraging extracurricular activities as ways of developing responsibility, and (4) improving the climate of the school by having higher expectations of students.

Staff also mentioned conducting teacher inservice, weeding out insensitive staff, and offering counseling as additional ways to improve the school's ability to help young people become more responsible.

Staff found numerous examples of activities in their high school that support the development of responsibility including an Experience-Based Career Education Program. Infusing concepts in classes and extracurricular activities were also mentioned. Only a few examples were provided in the area of school policies or improving the school climate, such as the formation of a high school committee on student responsibility.

Student participation in various extracurricular activities such as sports and clubs was mentioned frequently as ways to develop responsibility and leadership. Extracurricular activities were

considered effective because students choose to participate and recognize the need to be there on time for practice, workouts, etc. Participation was felt to teach young people discipline, consistency, dependability and the need to meet group criteria. Staff illustrated this point by mentioning incidents where planning for group activities helped students learn from their failures as well as from their successes. Competition through extracurricular activities was described as allowing pressure for excellence to exist when it is otherwise not encouraged in school. However, one teacher expressed concern about overemphasis on extracurricular activities to the detriment of school work.

Teachers felt there were some unfulfilled needs in the high school regarding the development of responsibility. Chief among these were the need for greater consistency in discipline and the need for stronger expectations regarding student attendance. Other perceived barriers to the development of responsibility in youth were: lack of adequate time for one-to-one teacher/student contact, large class size, pressure from the community and parents toward a more lenient discipline code, inadequate training of some teachers to adapt to different students, lack of an individualized curriculum and the limited opportunities for rewarding responsible behavior in this way.

One teacher summarized the high school environment in this way:

> "Kids are given many opportunities to exercise responsibility in high school but not the help needed. Therefore, the less mature students don't take advantage of the opportunity.""

In contrast to the structure of the regular school curriculum, the EBCE program was seen as providing a much more individualized environment. This program was seen to help students develop responsibility by giving them more responsibilities, rewarding them with more freedom if they fulfill responsiblities, using individualized projects, and implementing a well-understood student accountability program.

In general, responses provided by staff seem to support the contention that the high school provides many varied opportunities for developing responsibility on the part of students. However, there seems

to be a lack of clear policy and direction regarding how the school should foster the development of responsibility.

Role of the Workplace

School staff and employers were both asked what they felt employers should be doing to help youth develop greater responsibility. Staff felt that employers had a significant role to play. Their responses clustered into eight general categories: expectations, punctuality, challenges, standards and values, information about work, respect, context, and helping students learn.

Staff also felt that employers should communicate information about the workplace to youth, should stress the importance of punctuality, help youth become aware of standards and values in the workplace, and provide constant challenges.

Employers described a variety of things occurring at their jobsites that could help students develop a greater sense of responsibility. These factors have been divided into two categories.

First was the opportunity available to students to observe the consequences of different behaviors in the work place. Observing the firing of unreliable employees and the rewarding of good performance is an example of this category. The second type of factor might be described as motivational. It has to do with the fact that being given responsibility develops the sense of responsibility. Examples cited by employers included having the life of a pet depend on students, and working with young children who look up to them and have expecations for them.

While employers expressed the notion that expectations of responsibility generally result in a higher performance level, they often proceeded very cautiously in giving students increased responsibility. Many believed students must demonstrate acceptable maturity before being given increased responsibilities.

Factors limiting the development of a sense of responsibility were mainly external in nature: certification requirements, the narrow perspective implicit in part-time work, physical strength, agency policies, and insurance requirements.

Employers had suggestions to share with other employers for ways to help young people develop a greater sense of responsibility. These generally related to establishing positive working relationships with students such as: taking a personal interest in and trusting students, working closely together, setting forth expectations clearly, clarifying the purpose of a job, setting a good example, providing formal reviews, giving daily feedback, providing job satisfaction, keeping communications open, and letting students know that the organization relies on them.

Employers also mentioned again the notion that students should be given challenges, be allowed to assume responsibilities and use their own initiative, and be started on easy tasks and moved up to harder ones.

Staff and Student Ratings

Within the CWE and the EBCE programs, half of the students selected by their teachers were nominated as demonstrating high responsibility and the other half as demonstrating low responsibility. Each of the 40 students was also asked to rate themselves on a responsibility scale from 1 to 10. Students rated themselves in terms of their self-perceived level of responsibility in a regular classroom setting while in the CWE or EBCE program and at jobsites arranged through their program. On the whole, students rated themselves as most responsible while at jobsites, somewhat lower while in the CWE or EBCE program, and lowest in their regular classroom setting.

The staff ratings of student responsibility did not differ significantly by the student's sex or grade point average. Staff ratings correlated significantly (.48 correlation) with the students' self ratings while at the jobsite but not with their self ratings in the classroom or CWE/EBCE program. Students' grade point average correlated significantly with their self ratings on responsibility while in the classroom but not with their ratings at employer sites or in the CWE/EBCE program.

This suggests that academic abiity is a key factor in classroom behavior but not in behavior outside of the classroom. There were no significant differences in self ratings or responsibility between males and females or between students in EBCE and those in CWE.

The Meaning of Responsibility: A Consensus

A point of common agreement among youth, employers and staff is that responsibility involves being where you are supposed to be on time.

Employers and students in work-related programs often added the related idea of calling in if you are going to be late or absent. This practice is one that is developed through participation in EBCE and CWE programs but is seldom done in the regular high school program.

Trust

One aspect of responsibility more frequently discussed by youth and employers than by teachers is the importance of trust in building a responsible relationship.

Youth want to be trusted by adults. At the same time, employers tend to give young people more responsible assignments only if they feel they can trust them. Although educators are well aware of the need for their students to demonstrate employment competency at worksites, little seems to be done to help students recognize the importance of communicating trustworthiness.

In short, a student who can demonstrate a high level of trustworthiness and moderate competency to an employer is likely to receive greater opportunities for engaging in more responsible tasks than one who displays high task competency but only moderate trustworthiness. The paradox is that both educators and employers need to be willing to take risks. They need to give young people more challenging tasks before youth are able to really demonstrate their ability to handle more responsible positions. Many young people in our study are asking for this opportunity.

Reality

In reflecting on the perceptions of responsibility brought to light by this study, it is essential to keep in mind the reality of the context. Students in this study were not full-time employees performing critical jobs. They were involved at employer sites on a short-term exploration or job development basis. Employers were well aware of

this. Consequently, the amount of responsibiity generally given to students was limited.

Those employers who were willing to risk having students engage in tasks demanding greater responsibility generally discovered that young people can often accomplish much more than adults imagine. In the words of one student, "I behaved responsibly at my jobsite because they trusted me and expected me to be responsible."

Implications for Action

Staff in schools and training programs need to remember that responsibility will remain at a low level unless young people are provided opportunities to make decisions and design plans to carry them out. Only in that way can youth be responsible for the consequences of their decisions and actions. These opportunities for decision making need to begin in elementary school and expand as young people demonstrate greater maturity.

Not all young people have the same opportunities at jobsites to take on responsible tasks. Staff and parents need to help young people become aware of opportunities in their lives to grow in responsibility whether it be through taking care of their younger brothers and sisters at home, taking on leadership roles in extracurricular activities at school, participating in church or community groups, or taking possible risks among their peers by participating actively in the classroom or work setting. Employers need to communicate their expectations more clearly to young people at their worksite and be willing to gamble that many youth will rise to the challenge of performing well on more demanding tasks. They should also let young people know that they will be given more responsibile assignments after they first demonstrate competency on more routine tasks.

Wynne (1982) has suggested that "we need to teach" responsibility in incremental ways by placing youth in a succession of environments where they are progressively subjected to more demanding and complex supervision. At some point we gradually begin to pull away the formal accountability structure and hope that the youth, who by now have been socialized to responsibility, will retain this attitude even though the formal accountability structure has been removed."

Boards of Education, private industry councils, and other policy making groups need to ensure that any new work training program proposals developed have provisions built in for providing young people with opportunities to make decisions, assume responsible roles and be held accountable for their performance.

High schools of today often manage youth as if they expect them not to be responsible. For example, the same group control arrangements are used for older youth that were designed for children. Teachers and administrators need to rethink how freedom and accountability can be given to high school students to help them plan their own learning and manage their time.

Implications for Future Research

Initially, we were hopeful of applying the four models of responsibility developed by Brickman, et al. by differentiating characteristics of students who were willing to assume responsibility for their problems, for solutions, neither or both. We wished to correlate these results with students' self ratings of responsibility. To get at responsibility we asked students "If a student is having a problem learning in a high school classroom whose fault is it--the teacher's, student's, both, neither or someone else?" About one-third of the students felt the responsibility was that of the teacher's, one-third that of the student, and one-third felt both shared the responsibility. Many of the students being interviewed felt a need to state specific circumstances that would determine who was responsible. Thus the answers were highly confounded with their details. A similar confounding occurred when we asked students who was responsible for solving the problem. A parallel set of hypothetical questions was asked in the case of a young person who did not understand the directions of his work supervisor.

As a result of the more detailed explanations given by some students as to who was responsible for the problems and solutions under various circumstances, we abandoned our intent of a simple classification and analysis of results. Other researchers, however, may want to probe more deeply various factors affecting students' willingness to accept

responsibility for problems and solutions under various settings such as home, school and workplace.

In our earier discussions about responsibility and in re-examining field research notes of David Moore, we were able to clasify levels of responsibility as they related to three classifications used in the Dictionary of Occupational Titles--people, information, and things. For example, we found illustrations of young people supervising and training others at employer sites, willing to keep confidential business information secure, and showing respect for tools and equipment used on the job. Judith Kleinfeld (1979), in her study of responsibility in Eskimo schools, found public school teachers talking about student responsibility for things such as homework or school property while private school teachers talked more about responsibility to people such as other students, staff, the student's family and village. In the student interviews we conducted, however, relatively few illustrations of responsibility were naturally volunteered by students as they related to information or things. Examples did occur sometimes, however, if we probed. Because this classification system appeared artificial we abandoned the probe questions after conducting a dozen interviews. Other researchers may want to consider these elements or others in conducting further research on the topic of responsibility.

While this study focused on personal responsibility of young people, it is also important that researchers consider social responsibility and factors that affect it. A more comprehensive study might then examine the relationships between growth in personal and social responsibility as they occur in the home, school and workplace.

In conclusion, we feel that the concept of responsibility is an important element in human development theory and is a characteristic that has strong potential for being developed especially through education in field settings. As researchers interested in such settings, I would encourage you to explore more fully the construct of responsibility and the strategies effective in developing it in young people.

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